Third Section. **THE JOURNAL.** Eight Pages.

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 1896.—COPYRIGHT, 1896, BY W. R. HEARST.

THE RETIRED BANK ROBBER.

A Real Drama of Real Life in New York—The Story of Dan Noble, the Rich Burglar, Who is Now a Conspicuous Figure on Broadway.

THERE is nothing so beautiful as a beautiful crime, some one somewhere sagely stated, and eighteen years ago, when New York learned that a bank had been looted of three million dollars, there were many among us then who expressed more admiration than disgust.

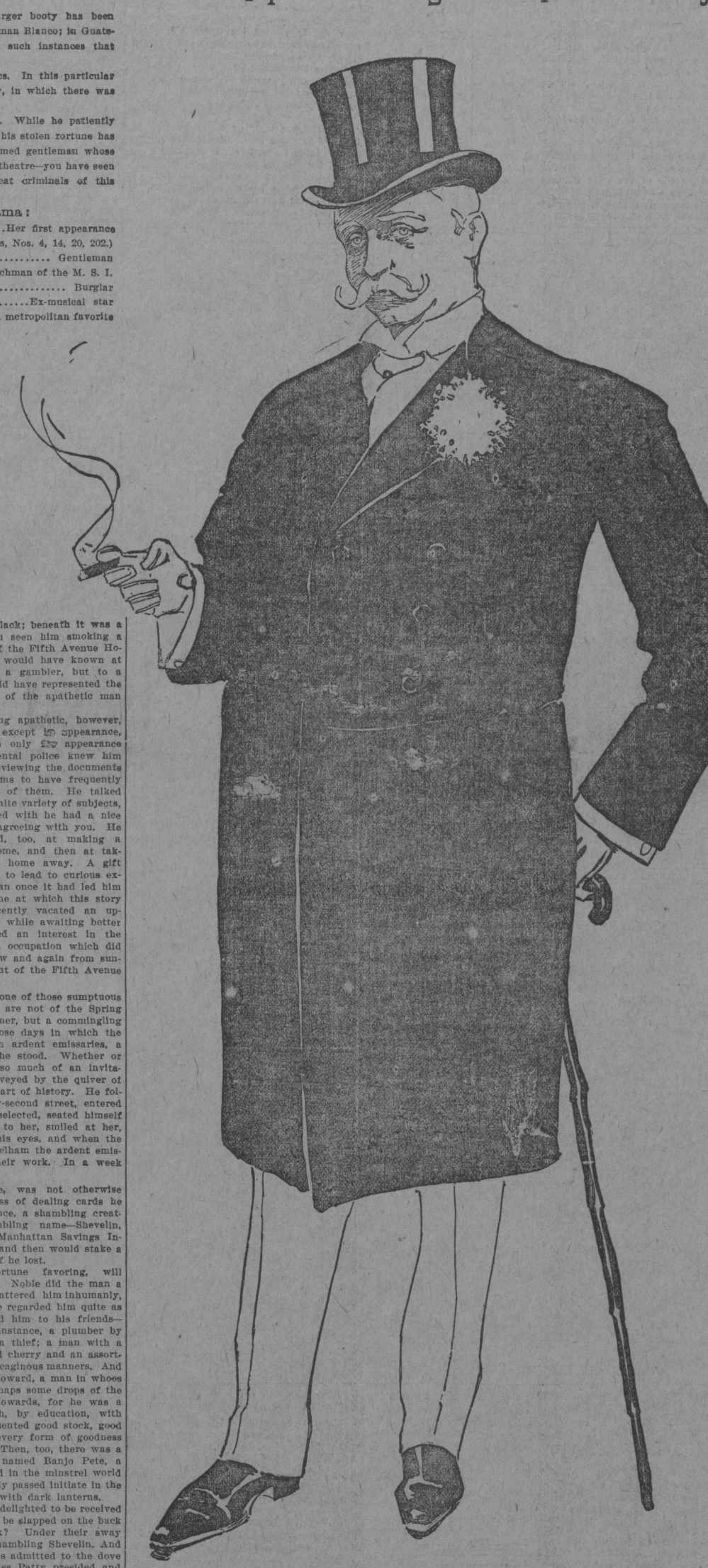
In Wall Street and over the sea in Threadneedle street, larger booty has been bagged. In Venezuela they will tell you of the exploits of Guzman Blanco; in Guatemala of the coups-de-main of Barrios, and in comparison with such instances that looting of three million is rather small.

In some localities robbery is finance; in others it is politics. In this particular case it was merely a burglar's job. But a job, parenthetically, in which there was a romance, one of which the mystery is unelucidated yet.

And to-day there walks on Broadway a retired bank robber. While he patiently worked out the long years of his sentence in an English prison his stolen fortune has grown. If you meet in one of the uptown cafes the well-groomed gentleman whose portrait appears on this page; if you find him beside you at the theatre—you have seen Dan Noble, perhaps the most skilful and successful of the great criminals of this generation.

The Real Characters in a Real Drama:

PATTY, once a pretty girl.................................Her first appearance
DAN NOBLE.............(See Records of Professional Criminals, Nos. 4, 14, 20, 202.)
GEORGE HOWARD..Gentleman
PATRICK SHEVELIN...................A supplementary watchman of the M. S. I.
JOHNNY HOPE..Burglar
BANJO PETE...Ex-musical star
INSPECTOR BYRNES..................................A metropolitan favorite
Underlings and understrappers.



COL. DANIEL NOBLE, EX-BURGLAR, ON BROADWAY.

CHAPTER I.
GONE WRONG.

Twenty years ago, in the adjoining manor of Pelham, there lived a girl named Patty. She was the prettiest of the pretty girls of the village, and she was as good as she was pretty. She had the sweet, coquettish little ways of a mouse, the daintiness of a Persian kitten, great blue eyes, a rippling laugh and a skin as fair as a lily. Her mother adored her, by her father she was worshipped. The mother died of a broken heart, the father died a drunkard. You may not know how parents feel when a child is led astray. And Patty had not even the excuse of being led; she bolted. A stranger passed through Pelham. In a week the girl was a by-word, in a month she was forgotten. What was the charm that stranger possessed which drew her innocence to him? To Patty's parents he represented that inexplicable thing which is called Antipathy, but to Patty he was that equally inexplicable thing which is Love. And not Love alone, he was Mystery, and of all things [illegible] the one which disturbs the im[illegible]. You who wish to be al[illegible] who love you, never let yourself be wholly known. Even in your kisses let there be a secret.

To the police, who have few fine terms, fewer prejudices, that stranger was neither lovable nor antipathetic—he was not even mysterious; a professional criminal merely, with whom they had had their say and who had given them his picture.

Patty gave him her heart, and gave it, too, as frankly and freely as though the gift had been consecrated in the nave of a cathedral. There are relationships which should never be entered into, but once begun, there are women who cannot sever them. When Patty learned, not the whole truth—for who ever learns that?—but a few decimal fractions of it, she neither berated her lover nor bemoaned her fate; she looked into that heart of hers, and saw there not love alone, but devotion, forgiveness, too, sympathy and consolation. Why is it that the worst men sometimes get the truest women? Why, indeed, unless it be that there are men, as there are women, who are charmful even in evil? And, besides, is it not a fact that a woman cares for a man not in proportion to what he does for her, but in proportion to what she does for him?

Patty, who had given the silk of her lips and lithe white arms, who had given up home and repute and whatever a girl can give, though weak was strong. Robinson Crusoe, you remember, fancied the island he discovered was an untrodden soil. The first time he took a stroll he found a footprint. This island was not untrodden; it had been pretty well peopled. Patty made discoveries just as unexpected, and though it is twenty years since her name became a by-word in Pelham, it is not as many weeks ago that she showed herself true to her trust.

It was in 1878 that the Manhattan Savings Institution was robbed of nearly three million dollars' worth of securities. It is but a few days ago that some of these securities were offered as collateral for a loan.

And thereby hangs this tale.

CHAPTER II.
SOULS WITH TEETH.

Twenty years ago there were plenty of faro banks on Broadway. Some were square; the majority were not. Among the latter was one situated near Bleecker street. It was a 10-cent joint, patronized by cheap clerks, the underlings of big houses, aspirants to the Rogues' Gallery; criminals sometimes in embryo, sometimes in fact.

The dealer was of a type that has disappeared. He dressed in broadcloth that [illegible] black and brilliant as his hat; his necktie, too, was black; beneath it was a diamond. Had you seen him smoking a fat cigar in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel you, of course, would have known at once that he was a gambler, but to a countryman he would have represented the supreme expression of the apathetic man about town.

There was nothing apathetic, however, about Dan Noble, except in appearance, and in appearance only for appearance sake. The Continental police knew him very well, yet in reviewing the documents in the case he seems to have frequently had the advantage of them. He talked very well on an infinite variety of subjects, and if you disagreed with he had a nice European habit of agreeing with you. He was a great hand, too, at making a stranger feel at home, and then at taking that stranger's home away. A gift such as that is apt to lead to curious experiences. More than once it had led him to jail. At the time at which this story begins he had recently vacated an up-country prison, and while awaiting better things had acquired an interest in the Broadway joint, an occupation which did not prevent him now and again from sunning himself in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

One afternoon on one of those sumptuous days of ours which are not of the Spring nor yet of the Summer, but a commingling of both; one of those days in which the air is charged with ardent emissaries, a girl passed where he stood. Whether or not she gave him so much of an invitation as may be conveyed by the quiver of an eyelid is not a part of history. He followed her to Forty-second street, entered the car which she selected, seated himself at her side, talked to her, smiled at her, fumbled her with his eyes, and when the train drew up at Pelham the ardent emissaries had done their work. In a week Patty was his.

Noble, meanwhile, was not otherwise idle. In the process of dealing cards he made an acquaintance, a shambling creature with a shambling name—Shevelin, watchman of the Manhattan Savings Institution, who now and then would stake a dime and grumble if he lost.

Acquaintance, fortune favoring, will ripen into intimacy. Noble did the man a few little services, flattered him inhumanly, and to show that he regarded him quite as an equal introduced him to his friends—Johnny Hope, for instance, a plumber by trade, by practice a thief; a man with a face like a brandied cherry and an assortment of fierce and oleaginous manners. And there was George Howard, a man in whoes veins there ran perhaps some drops of the blood of all the Howards, for he was a gentleman by birth, by education, with features that represented good stock, good taste, good looks, every form of goodness save the real one. Then, too, there was a lively young chap named Banjo Pete, a light that had failed in the minstrel world and who had recently passed initiate in the art of illuminating with dark lanterns.

Who would not be delighted to be received in such company, to be slapped on the back and urged to drink? Under their sway promptly fell the shambling Shevelin. And when in time he was admitted to the dove cote over which Miss Patty presided and was [illegible] elbow, to marvel at the sweetness of her mouse-like ways, to find himself gazed at by her great blue eyes, to hear the ripple of her laugh and his own name lisped by her lips, he felt as one may who emigrates to larger and fairer spheres.

Into that dove-cote were also admitted the other friends of Noble. That brisk young Pete, for instance, would bring his banjo, play he was Mr. Bones again, crack wonderful jokes and sing a rattling song. And Johnny Hope—Mr. Hopely in private life—would sometimes come with his lady, sometimes with his father, as nice a looking old gentleman as ever cracked a crib. And there, too, with his high-bred, clear-cut face, George Howard would lounge by the hour.

It was indeed a delightful company, and the wonder is slight that the shambling Shevelin fell under the spell. Another was falling, too, but under a spell of a different order. George Howard had begun to dream of Patty's eyes, to feel as he drowsed away the phantom touch of lips of silk.

CHAPTER III.
IN THE DOVE-COTE.

The process of falling has its gradations. And Hope, who had the restless eyes of the ferret, which nothing escape, watched Shevelin and knew to a minute when the process was complete.

In the case of Howard it may be that Patty's vision was less acute. Perhaps she was too indifferent to notice, and again it may be that she not only noticed, but knew. Where a woman is concerned there is a faint mathematical chance of the validity of any hypothesis.

But man is less complex, and Hope, who had not studied Shevelin with a view to the acquirement of psychological data, told him one day that he deserved to be wealthy, that he would adorn riches, and this oaf, who would have marred a sunset, believed him. Truly, if there be men uglier and stupider than God intended they should be, Shevelin was one of them. But that is as may be. The idea that he would adorn riches once accepted, it was in an entirely uncircuitous manner that Hope pointed out the royal road to them. That road led straight through the bank door, of which this idiot was the supplementary Sunday watchman. If scheme which Hope then suggested proved successful Shevelin was to receive a quarter of a million dollars—an amount which greedily and in anticipation he accepted at once.

The scheme was evangelical in simplicity. Howard, who in addition to attributes already recited, was an expert mechanician, needed only to pass a few contemplative minutes before a certain door. That door opened on the vault of the bank in which were the safes, and which, being to the rear of the room occupied by the clerks, was, during those hours in which the bank was open, unapproachable by an outsider.

According to Hope, it was therefore merely requisite that on some stormy Sunday morning, when there was no one about, Howard's access to and egress from the bank should be facilitated, and the rest, including that quarter of a million, would go on skates.

To this Shevelin presumably assented, and presumably, too, facilitated Howard in his work. The word presumably is used advisedly, for in this tenebrous history there are many details which are still obscure. Be that as it may, Howard in some fashion learned the nature of the lock in the vault, purchased another of the same structure from the same maker, and sat down to learn its secret.

After many experiments it occurred to him to bore a hole directly beneath the combination plate, and then with a wire to push back the tumblers of the lock. This he did, when behold! Open sesame, the door was ajar, the problem solved.

There was much conviviality that night at the dove-cote. Grand discoveries are of a nature to excite even the indolent, and you may be sure that a discovery such as that was not suffered to dawn unfeasted. Pete twanged the banjo to his most rollicking airs. Mr. Hope, who had come without his lady—it appeared afterward that there had been a tiff—was simply serene in sweetness, his face more like a brandied cherry than before. And Howard, the hero of the evening—you might have mistaken for a cotillon leader, had it not been for his good looks and unassuming air. There were others, of whom no particular mention is needful, but to all Patty acted the attentive hostess, her lips half-parted, her great blue eyes aglow.

Noble was called away during the progress of the festivities, and did not return till all the guests, save Howard, had gone. He was then just in time to hear Patty's call for help, to see Howard, one arm about her waist, the other across her neck.

Then he saw red; with a spring he was almost upon him. Howard had dropped the girl and caught a bottle with which he struck at Noble's head. When the latter recovered consciousness Patty had washed the blood away, but not the scar. Twenty years have not eliminated it.

CHAPTER IV.
BONDS AND BARS.

It takes death, or the possibility of it, to teach us that we should hasten to cherish those whom we love, if we do not wish them to leave us forever before we have loved them enough. Though the blow which Noble had received was not serious, it had come so near to being that and more, that Madame Patty, if her affection had so much as momentarily wavered, found it riveted for good and all. It was between her and her lover then for better or for worse until death should them part.

In a week Noble was dealing cards as apathetically as before. Meanwhile Howard had received a letter begging him, on a matter of great personal importance, to come at once to a place near Flatbush, with which he was familiar. From that moment he disappeared. Subsequently, near the outskirts of Yonkers, his body was found, a pistol at his head, a bullet in his heart. It was thought that he had killed himself, but examination disclosed another bullet, which had been fired from a distance through the back of his handsome head. There were surmises, but even the amateur detectives of the local press were unable to invent a clew.

But though the man had gone, the solution which he had reached remained.

One Sunday morning, when Shevelin was on duty, two men were admitted to the bank. Howard's prescription was tried and found to work like a charm. The doors of the vault opened and between those men and booty to the amount of six million there was at most but a few inches of steel.

The visitors, however, had merely come to reconnoitre, to calculate a few details; how long, for instance, it would take to crack the safes; how long to enter the bank, open the vault, and, the safes cracked, to gather the securities and be off. Being agile and precise in mathematics, they estimated that it would require fifty-five minutes to gut the entire place and get away.

It was then arranged that the operation should take place on the following Sunday. But incidentally an accident occurred. When returning the tumblers of the lock to their proper position and concealing the hole made beneath the combination plate with putty, it was found that through some mischance one of the tumblers was turned the wrong way, and though the door, to all appearances, was then locked as before, they did not need to be burglars to know that the next morning the cashier would be unable to work the combination, the hole would be discovered, suspicion aroused, the lock changed, no doubt; new [illegible] gone for good.

And as a matter of fact, on the morrow, when the door was finally opened, the putty was discovered—the hole which it was intended to conceal as well. The matter was promptly reported to the Board of Directors, who paid no attention to it whatever, a circumstance which heightens a suspicion which the writer has long entertained that never yet have dignities lessened the length of the ears.

The ears of those visitors, however, were tolerably acute, and dectecting no rumor or menace of danger, discovering, in sort, nothing but an apathy stagnant and mute, one which, God forgive them, they were almost free to construe into an invitation to come early and often, they promptly got to business again and perfected their plans.

Those plans were, after entering the building, to bind and gag the janitor, a little old man, who occupied a room on the floor above the bank, and meanwhile to provide a fake janitor, who, while they were at work, could be dusting about in full view of the street.

The fake janitor, dressed in a linen coat and provided with side whiskers such as the real janitor wore, was a subordinate with the villainous, Dickensesque name of Abe Coakley, who, however, seems to have played his little part with entire sangfroid and effect. A roundsman passing the bank on the morning of the burglary saw him dusting at the window, nodded to him and was gratified with a nod in return.

But that little performance had perhaps been anticipated, and with it, in any event, the duty of informing the gang when a barber whose shop was under the bank, and whom any noise would alarm, should appear. It was the custom of this barber to enter his shop on Sunday morning at 7 o'clock. And it was calculated that if the bank was entered after the night watchman had gone, at 6, there would be just the necessary time in which to do the job.

The job itself was to be performed by Hope, with the aid of a subordinate named Goodie. These two were to open the safes, while Banjo Pete and a policeman named Nugent were to stand guard, revolver in hand.

This programme was practically adhered to. On the morning of Sunday, October 27, 1878, the bank was entered, the janitor bound and gagged, two safes were opened, $3,000,000 at the rate of $100,000 a minute was abstracted, a third safe was about to be opened, in which there were three million more, when the fake janitor announced that the barber, fully one-half hour before his usual time, was entering the shop below.

Hope and Goodie put down their tools, the fake janitor resumed his normal appearance, the policeman and the ex-minstrel star pocketed their revolvers and in two minutes the band had disappeared.

Three hours later the janitor had succeeded in loosening his bonds and the alarm was given. When the police came there were two empty safes and a neat kit of tools of Birmingham manufacture to tell them they had come too late.

It was at this juncture that Inspector Byrnes appeared and presently, with that acumen which has made him the foremost inquisitor of the age, began playing with Shevelin and continued to play until that wretched oaf, who instead of the [illegible] of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars had received but six hundred, split on his pals.

It may be, fortune favoring, [illegible] would have got more, for while, barring thirty or forty thousand in cash, the rest of the booty was all in bonds, of which the [illegible] could be stopped, yet it was assumed that the bank would prefer to ransom those bonds at say fifty cents on the dollar than to lose them entirely. The bank, however, did nothing of the kind. It appealed to the Government, the Duplicate Securities Bill was passed, and the loss to the institution practically nullified.

But fancy the loss to Mr. Hope. Fancy, too, the injury of his feelings. Yet that, comparatively speaking, was little to the shock caused by the shambling Shevelin's defection, for that cost Mr. Hope a twenty-year sentence and his confederates nearly as much.

Meanwhile Noble had vanished, the dove-cote was untenanted and of the securities there was not a trace.

CHAPTER V.
ON THE HEELS OF JOY.

In geometry a straight line is the shortest. In life it is sometimes just the other way. Though Noble had vanished and Patty had disappeared, and the rest of the gang were in prison, there were people fanciful enough to maintain that sooner or later those securities would be forthcoming. From the evidence adduced at the trial it appeared that Hope and his lady had separated. It appeared also that when the band dispersed at the bank, Nugent was in charge of the booty and that he had subsequently surrendered it to Hope. What did Hope do with it? There were many surmises, but not a clew.

Presently from abroad came the announcement that Noble had been extradited from Italy for a forgery committed in London and had there, in the Old Bailey, been sent to Millbank for a good round term.

Recently that term expired, and recently there appeared in New York an elderly gentleman with a scar on his face, an apathetic manner, a drawl in his speech, and the stamp of Piccadilly from head to toe.

His earliest visit was to a woman who once had sweet coquettish mouse-like ways, the daintiness of a Persian kitten, a skin as fair as a lily and great blue wondering eyes. She has changed since then. But beauty, like fish, must be kept on ice. It is unemotional people who retain their looks. And this poor woman had a heart, and when a woman has that she must yield to it or it breaks. Then, too, there are those who are born with a sort of vocation for happiness. In vain it escapes them. Its slights cannot triumph over their obstinacy. They bide its time and await it.

When the elderly man with the scar on [illegible] man, it was as though a bird in her breast had burst into song; for a moment beauty seemed [illegible] waited, yet instantly, something, an atmosphere, an influence purely intangible, must have told her that she had waited in vain. The gleam retreated from her eyes, the bird within her ceased its song. So sorrow treads upon the heels of joy. At once she understood why he had come, and presently, when he left her, there was a package in his hand.

A few days ago newspaper readers were informed that a bundle of the securities, stolen eighteen years ago from the Manhattan Savings Institution, had been offered as collateral for a loan.

EDGAR SALTUS.